



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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## **WSDA provides cost-share reimbursement to Washington's organic industry**

OLYMPIA – The state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) late in March began issuing partial reimbursement to organic producers, processors and handlers for the cost they must pay to become certified under the new national organic law. To date, checks have been issued to more than 250 applicants, and additional funds are available. To apply for funding, contact WSDA at (360) 902-1805.

Applicants can receive up to 75 percent of the costs of obtaining certification, with a maximum payment of \$500. The actual amount will be based on a percentage of the annual fee an organic applicant pays to WSDA for certification. Washington has received \$350,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the reimbursement program. Funds will be allocated to eligible organic producers for each of the next two years.

“An estimated 900 certified organic producers, processors and handlers in Washington are eligible for partial reimbursement,” said Miles McEvoy, manager of the Organic Program. The average payment to date has been about \$275.

To be eligible for funding in the first year of the reimbursement program, applicants must have received organic certification or renewal certification between Oct. 1, 2002 and Sept. 30, 2003.

Authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill, the program assists the organic industry in obtaining certification under the new national organic guidelines. The guidelines require compliance with the national organic standards in order to sell, label, or represent agricultural products as organic. The fees paid to WSDA for organic certification are based on annual sales and range from \$200 to \$10,000. Nearly half of the state's organic producers have annual sales under \$15,000 and pay an annual certification fee of \$200.

For more information, write to the WSDA Organic Program, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560 or call Christa Bemis at (360) 902-1805. Visitors to WSDA's Web site can download the [application](http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/docs/Applications/CostShareApplication.pdf) (<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/docs/Applications/CostShareApplication.pdf> ).

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